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UNCLAS MANAMA 000865

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR PM/SNA, NEA/RA, AND NEA/ARP
CAIRO FOR STEVE BONDY

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [BA](#) [KICC](#)

SUBJECT: OPPOSITION TO ARTICLE 98 AGREEMENTS APPEARS IN
BAHRAIN'S PRESS

REF: MANAMA 831

1.SUMMARY AND COMMENT: Bahraini Arabic newspapers reported that participants at human rights conference roundly criticized U.S. article 98 agreements. Fortunately, participants did not discuss the U.S.-Bahrain Article 98 agreement. This negative press reinforces our view that obtaining parliamentary approval for Article 98 entry into force would be next to impossible at this time. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

2. The June 5 edition of the semi-governmental Arabic daily "al-Ayam" carried a story about a regional human rights conference on the ratification and implementation of the International Criminal Court Treaty. The seminar was sponsored by the Bahrain Human Rights Society (BHRS), the International Federation for Human Rights (IFHR - possibly a French NGO), and Bahrain's Ministry of Justice. Featured speakers included the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Justice, Shaikh Khalid bin Ali Al-Khalifa, BHRS President Sabika Najjar, and an unnamed IFHR representative.

3. The journalist who wrote the story told POLFSN that a Yemeni participant intervened during the discussions to stress the importance of rejecting the ratification of any bilateral treaty with the U.S. that protects its soldiers and citizens from the jurisdiction of the ICC. Participants from Egypt and Jordan juxtaposed the EU's lack of concern with the supreme judicial authority granted in the treaty to the ICC with U.S. efforts to escape international accountability by signing such bilateral agreements. A Bahraini member of the Bahrain Society for Human Rights, a GOB-endorsed NGO, sought clarification on the extent of protections a bilateral agreement might provide to American citizens. He also questioned whether bilateral treaties grant any American immunity from ICC prosecution if they commit crimes in countries that are parties to the ICC convention.
NEUMANN